

**ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW
#303**

**JOHN JOSEPH ECK
TRIPLER GENERAL HOSPITAL**

**INTERVIEWED ON
DECEMBER 8, 1998
BY DANIEL MARTINEZ**

TRANSCRIBED BY:

CARA KIMURA

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**USS *ARIZONA* MEMORIAL
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION**

Daniel Martinez (DM): The following oral history interview was conducted by Daniel Martinez, historian for the National Park Service at the USS *Arizona* Memorial. It was taped at the Imperial Palace Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada on December 8, 1998, at approximately 5:30 p.m. The person being interviewed is John J. Eck, who was at Tripler Hospital, representing the U.S. Army medical corps on December 7, 1941. For the record, John, would you be so kind as to state your full and complete name?

John Joseph Eck (JE): John J. Eck.

DM: And what did the "J" stand for?

JE: Joseph.

DM: And could you tell me what your place of birth was?

JE: Fairfield, Pennsylvania.

DM: And what was the date?

JE: April 7, 1921.

DM: And would you consider Fairfield as your hometown in 1941?

JE: In 1941, no.

DM: What was your hometown?

JE: My hometown was primarily Bonneville, which was just about five miles from Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

DM: Pennsylvania. Okay. How many brothers and sisters did you have in your family?

JE: I had three brothers and two sisters.

DM: And where were you in that group?

JE: I was the youngest.

DM: In World War II, did any of your brothers or sisters serve besides you?

JE: Yes. My one brother served in the Army Air Corps.

DM: And was he able to survive that?

JE: Yes.

DM: And did he fly with the Eighth Air Force, or...

JE: Yes and he was a crew chief on a B-25.

DM: Okay. What did your father do for a living?

JE: He was a farmer.

DM: So you grew up on a farm?

JE: That's correct.

DM: And you had all those farm chore duties and all of that?

JE: Absolutely.

DM: Milk cows?

JE: Early in the morning because my brother drove the milk truck, so we were the first ones to get the milk on the milk truck.

DM: Now, were you a dairy farm or were you...

JE: No, it was a just a general farm.

DM: And where—that farm was located in Pennsylvania?

JE: That was in Bonneville, Pennsylvania.

DM: Okay. And you went to school where?

JE: I went to school primarily started, of course, in Fairfield.

DM: Right.

JE: And in 1933, we moved in Bonneville and there is where I went to school.

DM: And high school as well?

JE: No. My high school was G.E.D.

JE: General Educational Development, which was schooling, completing your high school and attaining your high school degree in the service.

DM: Okay. When did you enlist in the U.S. Army?

JE: October 1940.

DM: So you enlisted rather late then. How old were you when you enlisted?

JE: Eighteen.

DM: Oh, I'm sorry. Then you were not that late. So when you graduated from high school, it was about a year afterwards you enlisted?

JE: No. I obtained my G.E.D. in the service.

DM: In the service.

JE: That's correct.

DM: So you worked on the farm during those years.

JE: Exactly.

DM: Now the depression, was that very tough on your family?

JE: Well, living on a farm, of course, you always had plenty to eat.

DM: Right.

JE: But not too much of other things, at that particular time. And it was directly after the depression years, in 1933, when my father bought the farm and moved from Fairfield to Bonneville.

DM: I see. Now, when you enlisted in the army, where did you enlist at?

JE: My enlistment was in York, Pennsylvania. This was my recruiting area.

DM: Uh-huh. And from there, where did you go for your training?

JE: Fort Slocum, New York I did my basic training.

DM: What was boot camp like?

JE: Tough.

DM: (Chuckles) What was the toughest thing about it?

JE: Well, the discipline, which of course, was much more rigid in those days than it is today, very definitely.

DM: And how did you get involved with the medical corps?

JE: Well, that is a little unusual in that my buddy and I knew we were ready for the draft, so at that particular time, the enlist normally was for three years, but overseas duty was considered time and a half. So you get credit for three years' service with serving two years.

DM: Right.

JE: So we thought, we knew that we would be drafted because we were the right age and etcetera, so we thought well we'll go where we want to go and do what we want to do. But we knew an older gentleman that had served in the service before and he was with the 64th Coast Artillery in Hawaii. So we wanted to volunteer for the 64th Coast Artillery.

Well there wasn't any openings in Hawaii in any part of the service. So the recruiting agency said well, we'll go into an adjacent recruiting area and see if we can get something.

Well, they came back with two openings in the medical service in Hawaii. That's how...

DM: How you ended up.

JE: How I ended up. My friend went, after basic medical service at Schofield Barracks, he ended up in the 25th Division and I was assigned to duty at Tripler General Hospital.

DM: What was the medical corps training like?

JE: Well, it was, I would say, quite adequate because I think the medical corps did quite well for themselves during the service.

DM: What kind of things would they teach you?

JE: Well, basic medical techniques, really.

DM: Would you be doing things like a pharmacist mate in the navy, suturing, making medicines, dispensing medicines, taking care of minor things like that?

JE: Well, usually, yes, the medical technicians would be doing this, however I was not a basic advanced medical tech.

DM: Okay.

JE: I was an advanced dental tech.

DM: Okay. All right. And did you learn this in the States or did you learn that in Hawaii?

JE: I learned that in Hawaii at Tripler General Hospital primarily.

DM: When did you arrive in Hawaii?

JE: In November 1940.

DM: So you were there nearly a year and-thirteen months.

JE: Thirteen months prior to December 7, correct.

DM: Did you live at Fort Shafter or where did you live?

JE: No, we lived on the hospital grounds.

DM: There was barracks there or billets there?

JE: Tents and etcetera, yes.

DM: How was the living there?

JE: Very comfortable and we enjoyed it very much. Life in Hawaii before the war was great.

DM: Yeah. Did you enjoy taking, getting your passes and going into town?

JE: Oh absolutely and going to Kaneohe, to the beach and so forth quite frequently.

DM: Did you ever meet any girls there or...

JE: Well, usually just the—no one in particular, but...

DM: Did you ever go down to downtown Honolulu for a little recreation?

JE: Oh yes, very frequently.

DM: Now, they have all kinds of forms of recreation down there. There was some recreation you'd find at the Black Cat that had to do with maybe getting a good meal.

JE: Correct.

DM: A few bars down there.

JE: Correct, and that's usually what you went down for, was to enjoy a few drinks and a good meal.

DM: Now, the army, did you have a bar or a place that you guys liked to hang out, that you felt comfortable with.

JE: Not generally, no. Just anywhere. Normally you go down and visit Hotel Street. I don't know if Hotel Street is still in existence.

DM: Well, the street is but the wonderful accommodations at the New Senator and the Cottages no longer exist. But that was kind of an interesting experience down there, I suspect.

JE: Oh yes. Oh yes. Quite. (Laughs)

DM: One of the things that comes up with rest and recreation, of course, in downtown Honolulu was how did you get along with the navy guys?

JE: Well, we got along quite well with them.

DM: Uh-huh.

JE: Usually when you went down, it was not unusual to see a little bit of a scuffle, for example, about every other block. Usually between the army and the navy or the navy and the Marines, or what have you. Or occasionally between one of the service members and a native.

DM: A local, is that right?

JE: Correct. And there isn't any question as to who we were supporting. (Laughs)

DM: In all that. Now, I understand the Honolulu Police Department was a no-nonsense police department.

JE: No question. However the MPs did a great job during that time. They kept us usually away from the local police.

DM: Yeah. Now, as the kind of clouds of war gathered, did you have any idea that Hawaii might be involved in the war at some time. Or was it so remote?

JE: Absolutely none.

DM: Yeah. Now, in December of 1941, you're working here at Tripler Hospital. Let's talk a little bit about the hospital. How large a facility was that?

JE: Oh gee, it was the primary hospital on Hawaii. It was the general hospital, which meant that all the more serious patients were transferred there from Schofield [*Barracks*], Hickam [*Field*], Fort Shafter.

DM: You treated only army patients?

JE: Yes, primarily. The navy had their own facility.

DM: So you would have full services there—surgery.

JE: Everything, yes.

DM: Everything you needed. X-ray, it was all there.

JE: Oh, very definitely. Major surgery.

DM: Was the building large?

JE: It was _____ type buildings. By that I mean two regular two-story type buildings with a lanai that came out off of them.

DM: Now, where did this—the new Tripler Hospital that we know exists in Hawaii today, where did this one stand?

JE: This one was off of King Street, directly across the street from the main gate to Fort Shafter.

DM: Okay. Now where the freeway runs.

JE: I don't know about that.

DM: Okay. That's about where it is. Okay. What were your hours of duty? Did that change or was it during the day mostly, 'cause you worked for the dentist, right?

JE: That was the primary reason I chose for a career in dental, was because they never worked on weekends and I'd like to speak a little more about that if I may.

DM: Sure. Absolutely.

JE: Particularly on the morning of December 7, to give an indication, an answer to your question, about whether we knew what was happening. The unique thing was that we never worked on weekends in the dental clinic. The morning of December 7, which was Sunday morning, we were awakened early and told to report ready for a full day's duty. To this time, I have no idea why.

DM: The raid hadn't even started?

JE: No, this was prior to seven, this was prior to seven o'clock in the morning and the raid hadn't started until 7:55.

DM: And who gave you that order?

JE: The first sergeant, or the sergeant in charge of the dental clinic.

DM: So you got up early that morning?

JE: Got up early that morning, reported for duty. We were standing on the rooftop of the little screened area, or lanai if you will. Saw the planes coming in, in formation. And saw some small ships out there. Saw them peeling off, bombs bursting around the ships attempting to get away from them.

DM: At Pearl Harbor?

JE: Well, it was before Pearl Harbor, because we were between Honolulu and Pearl Harbor...

DM: Gotcha.

JE: ...if you're familiar with the area.

DM: Sure.

JE: (Clears throat) And all we could think of was that they had an annual maneuver between the army, the Army Air Force, and the navy, which terminated Saturday noon.

DM: Right.

JE: And the only thing that we could figure was, gee, this is a very realistic termination or extension to the maneuver. That, and we still had no idea as to what was happening. And we didn't know what was happening until the casualties from Hickam Field started coming in by the two and a half ton truckload.

DM: How long did it take for casualties to start coming in?

JE: Couple of hours.

DM: So the raid was over by then.

JE: Well, the first strike was over by then...

DM: Right.

JE: ...yes, but then there was a second one.

DM: Okay. So now casualties start coming in.

JE: Correct.

DM: And where were these casualties coming from?

JE: From primarily from Hickam Field.

DM: And what kind of things were you seeing?

JE: Anything that you can imagine, being a nineteen-year-old kid from a farm in Pennsylvania, very rarely if ever having seen death, let alone traumatic death. It was quite an experience. Of course, things were happening so rapidly that you really didn't have time to think about what was happening until later.

DM: What was your job?

JE: You didn't have a job at that particular time. You did whatever presented itself.

DM: Where were you putting these wounded?

JE: On the ground around the hospital grounds. The hospital grounds were covered completely with litters. You couldn't walk without stepping over a litter of the wounded.

DM: How many wounded do you think were out there?

JE: Oh geez, I have, I really have no, I have no idea.

DM: More than a hundred?

JE: Yes. Very definitely.

DM: Now, there wasn't such a thing called triage at the time, right?

JE: That's correct.

DM: But I understand that basically that's what you guys were doing.

JE: Well, what you had at that particular time was a triage officer. As I said, you had them coming in by the truckload.

DM: Right.

JE: You would have a medical officer on board, get up on board the truck and as the patients were taken off of the truck, he would indicate that this one is so badly wounded that it's...

DM: He's not going to make it.

JE: ...not going to make it, so set him aside. This one, there's a possibility that we can save him. This one is dead, take him to the morgue. A very—an experience that I'll never forget. I happen to be, take a litter off of the back of the truck. And the doctor says, "Take him to the morgue," which we took him to the morgue and sat the litter down, and the patient sat up on the litter. Which was a rather harrowing experience.

DM: Did he say anything?

JE: The doctor just said, "Get him out of here and take him in for treatment."

DM: Now, there were a lot of casualties coming in. Did that morgue fill rather quickly?

JE: That morgue was totally, totally inadequate. They used the Red Cross recreation hall as a temporary morgue. And by the next morning there was row after row—there was a large dance floor in the recreation area—and there was just row after row of the dead, before they were transferred to more, you know, more permanent morgues, etcetera, in downtown.

DM: Not meaning to be ghoulish, but how serious were the wounds? And what types of wounds were you seeing?

JE: Any type that you could possibly think of. As I said, I don't know how gory you want me to get. The following morning, I was assigned to removing the dead from the recreation hall. And it was not unusual, when you picked them up, they didn't have litters of course, they were just taken off the litters and laid on the floor. And you would attempt to pick up a corpse, for example, and maybe an arm would pull off in your hand or maybe a head would roll off to the side or what have you. These are the memories that you just don't want to remember.

DM: You never had experienced anything like it before.

JE: As I said, I was a nineteen-year-old kid living all of my life on the farm, never having experienced death hardly, let alone trauma such as this.

DM: How did the staff react to all of this pressure?

JE: Why, they did a magnificent job. There was no question. They did an absolutely fantastic job.

DM: Surgery must have been quite active?

JE: Oh, (chuckles) absolutely! Well, they were administering morphine and so forth just as soon as they possibly could, with those that they knew that had a chance of surviving.

DM: Now how close did you guys come to running out of supplies?

JE: Well, to my knowledge we didn't. They were pretty well-supplied and to my knowledge, there wasn't any problem of that nature.

DM: Many doctors worked long, hard hours that...

JE: Oh yes. Straight through the night and the next day, very definitely and for weeks thereafter.

DM: How about yourself? How long did your days go?

JE: Well, ours were, I was assigned to a ward after things had quieted down, but as I said, the next day was still hectic and chaos.

DM: Did you eventually get down to see what had happened at Hickam Field?

JE: No, I didn't. I didn't get over to see the destruction at...

DM: How about Pearl Harbor?

JE: No, I did not.

DM: So your view of the destruction, of the attack, came in the way of human form?

JE: That's correct.

DM: And probably very violent.

JE: Oh, very definitely, yes.

DM: Has it, over the years, or immediately after, this must have been a difficult thing to deal with, even though you were trained as a medical corpsman?

JE: Well, as I said, at the particular time, everything was happening so fast that you really didn't think about what was happening, but after you had time to think about what had happened and what potentially might happen, you were really, really scared.

DM: When did that come to you?

JE: When things had quieted down, that night for example, after things had quieted down and the patients primarily had been taken care of, as far as possible, under the circumstances.

DM: Over the period of years, has the events of December 7 come back to revisit you and haunt—and maybe haunt is too strong a word, but to come back and be part of that memory?

JE: The primary, yes, the primary thing, as I say, was that in the morgue, the Red Cross hall the following day. That was the most harrowing experience that I've ever had in my life.

DM: Have you been able to talk about that to your fellow survivors or your...

JE: I don't talk that much about it, no. We...

DM: When people, for instance, find out you're a Pearl Harbor survivor, they probably almost immediately ask you, "Where were you?"

JE: Yes. Yes.

DM: And how do you respond to that without getting into those details?

JE: Well, you try to evade it as much as possible. We, for example, one of our primary purposes of the Pearl Harbor Survivors, our motto is "Remember Pearl Harbor. Keep America alert." And we try to make the younger generation aware of this and consequently we frequently talk to classes in school and so forth, and of course we don't go into that details of that nature with the younger generation.

DM: Would be difficult to do that, wouldn't it?

JE: Yes, very definitely. But yet, this is reality.

DM: Right. And your reality was a very tough one, because that's where the carnage of Pearl Harbor was ending up at these hospitals, whether they be navy or army hospitals.

JE: Exactly.

DM: In the immediate area.

JE: Exactly.

DM: Have you ever talked to any of those that worked at the navy hospitals, about their experience? Because I just ran into one of the guys that was, and we interviewed him, that was at Hospital Point.

JE: Mm-hmm.

DM: Have you ever had an opportunity to touch base with those guys?

JE: Well, not to exchange experiences and so forth, necessarily, no.

DM: No. Over these past fifty-seven years too, the story of Pearl Harbor has become for the Pearl Harbor survivors, one that you as an organization want to make sure that the nation is aware of. How did it strike you when the national day of remembrance was signed as a day that the nation would pause to remember?

JE: Well, this is primarily what we've been striving for all this time, is to try to make people aware of how horrible war actually is and that we never want to go through it again and we never want to be, leave ourselves, get into the position that we were prior to World War, to Pearl Harbor, World War II.

DM: Did the events of December 7 reinforce that feeling for you or create that feeling for you?

JE: Well, it created that feeling because we never had any knowledge of anything of this nature prior to that time.

DM: And so in a sense, as a soldier, you became an advocate of trying to negotiate rather for peace and try to work things out between nations rather than go to war with them.

JE: Unquestionably, yes.

DM: The medical department during this very difficult time of World War II made great strides in the way of dealing with patients and treatments and surgeries.

JE: Drugs. Many, many things. This is, if any good comes out of a war, this is it, the surgical procedures, the medicines. Sulfur, for example, during World War II, etcetera.

DM: Medical advancements, unfortunately, move forward because of the experience that doctors go through, right.

JE: Exactly. Exactly.

DM: Did you have nurses, female nurses, there at Tripler?

JE: Oh yes, very definitely. Yes.

DM: And how did—they'd work long hours as well?

JE: Oh my gosh, yes. They worked as hard as the doctors and some of them longer than the doctors did.

DM: Are there Pearl Harbor Survivor members that are some of these women?

JE: Oh yes. Oh yes. As a matter of fact, in one of the Denver chapters, which I belong to, we have a nurse that was stationed at Tripler at the time that I was. As a matter of fact, we share an experience.

DM: What's that?

JE: That was a Japanese plane flying over the hospital area so low—and I know it was the same plane because the experience was exactly the same—so low that you could actually identify his gold teeth in his mouth. That's how free they were and...

DM: They flew right down that valley there?

JE: Absolutely. Well, they were right—you know the algarroba bushes that...

DM: Right.

JE: ...how short they are, he was just skimming the tops of them.

DM: And where were you when that all happened, standing on the front lawn?

JE: Standing by the hospital area there, yes.

DM: Incredible. Was that a fighter plane, a single...

JE: Yeah, a single engine plane, yes.

DM: We're going to switch tape at this time and then we'll wrap up the interview and I'll also ask you about some things that you...

JE: Fine.

END OF TAPE #44

TAPE #45

DM: ...the people at Tripler Hospital that performed those days, because it wasn't just a day, but those days that followed the attack on Pearl Harbor.

JE: Yes.

DM: Was any special commendation or recognition given to your unit?

JE: Not that I can recall, no.

DM: It seems a little sad. You guys worked very, very hard.

JE: Well, that was our duty and we accepted it as such.

DM: Did any of the general officers come down to Tripler to see what was going on, I mean, or were they busy with other things? Did General Short come down there or any of it, maybe Fielder or anybody like that?

JE: I really, that I really don't know. Of course, we were, you know, so busy and preoccupied that if they did, they would've been with the brass and...

DM: One question is, the dead obviously had to be dealt with and buried. Though as burials that went on in Halawa valley, is that where the army dead were taken?

JE: I don't know. I really don't know. They, as I said, they were dispersed from the Red Cross hall...

DM: Uh-huh.

JE: ...to the morgues downtown and so forth, because there were so many of them that many, many of the morgues downtown must have been filled at that time, because many of these casualties occurred early in the morning...

DM: Right.

JE: ...on December 7. And it gets rather warm over there, as you well know.

DM: Right.

JE: And this was the following morning, so you can imagine what had occurred during that period of time.

DM: Did you work into the night?

JE: Yes, very definitely.

DM: Some people said that it rained that night. Do you remember that?

JE: No, I don't remember rain. No.

DM: Did you hook up lighting out there or lanterns, or how did you go about your business?

JE: Well usually by that time, we had most of 'em cleared off of the hospital grounds.

DM: And the hospital was obviously full, every bed...

JE: Oh yes. Oh yes.

DM: Did they have 'em in the hallways?

JE: As a matter of fact, I talked to some friend of mine that was in the hospital, but was not acutely ill at that particular time and they told him that they needed the beds, that they should go back to their, return to their units.

DM: Do you recall anything that night about gunfire going off?

JE: Oh yes, all over the place, as a matter of fact. We were very apprehensive because there was reports of Japanese parachutists...

DM: Right.

JE: ...in the area. Definitely. And saboteurs, etcetera.

DM: Did you have to black out the hospital or, because blackout was issued, but I'm wondering if you're sitting in that little valley there, did they ask you to blackout as well?

JE: Well, of course, you didn't have time at that particular time to do anything of that nature. You observed it as well as you could, but just very limited really.

DM: When did you finally get some sleep?

JE: I don't recall really. It must have been the following night.

DM: December 8?

JE: Yeah.

DM: Fifty-seven years ago today.

JE: Exactly.

DM: You finally got some sleep. You were up at minimum of at least twenty-four to thirty-six hours.

JE: Yes. Yes.

DM: Twenty-four hours, I guess.

JE: At least.

DM: And probably even more than that.

JE: Yeah. As I say, I don't remember when. These are things that, you know, you just don't remember.

DM: Yeah. Has this created any kind of nightmares? Did you suffer from nightmares?

JE: No. No.

DM: Did you ever have to talk to any medical people at all?

JE: No.

DM: So you've dealt with this on your own terms?

JE: Yes, yes.

DM: And that's been difficult?

JE: Yes, it has been.

DM: Many of the survivors tell us stories of loss of friends and tremendous despair. Did you lose anybody that you knew that day?

JE: No one close. No. Not during...

DM: Not anybody you went through your training class with?

JE: No. No, because the hospital was not bombed...

DM: Right.

JE: ...or strafed.

DM: I was just wondering if any of the buddies that you went to town with or anything...

JE: No, no.

DM: That might have been even harder, if you had lost somebody you knew?

JE: Oh, unquestionably it would have. Yes.

DM: How did you get word to your folks that you were okay?

JE: They had a—I forget the exact nomenclature of it, but it was a little letter...

DM: Uh-huh.

JE: ...that was sent through military channels.

DM: And what could you write on the letter?

JE: It was two weeks later and I just primarily—my sister showed it to me here, oh, a number of months ago and I don't remember—but it was that I'm okay and so forth, which they arrived at least two weeks after the attack.

DM: Did you take any photographs or anything at—not during the attack, but I mean before the attack? Do you have pictures of yourself at that time?

JE: Unfortunately, all of my pictures and so forth—I joined the 77th Infantry Division, medical unit, attached to the 77th and that was all lost when I left Guam to come back to the United States.

DM: How was it lost?

JE: I left it in a footlocker there and it just didn't, never arrived at home.

DM: What a shame. So the only memento you have left of that time period is that card that went home?

JE: Exactly, yes.

DM: Yeah. Well, did you have any pictures taken of you when you went home on leave during World War II?

JE: Not really. Not that much because you had other things on your mind at that—particularly...

DM: Sure.

JE: ...particularly at that time.

DM: I was just wondering for your file, if there would be anything that we could add to that, would be like a picture or a memento of something, or a copy of something that might be of assistance?

JE: Other than the letter that I just spoke to you about...

DM: Do you think we might be able to get a Xerox of that?

JE: I can try.

DM: Oh, that would be great.

JE: I can try.

DM: That would be great. Is there anything that you'd like to tell us that we didn't cover in this interview or share with us?

JE: Well, one of the things that I'll never forget, Christmas Day.

DM: Why is that?

JE: Nineteen forty-one. We spent that day transporting the wounded from the hospital to a hospital ship for evacuation

to the United, back to United States. Those that were so severely wounded that didn't have a chance of recovering and returning to their units.

DM: Was that hard?

JE: Very.

DM: Because these guys were in pretty rough shape.

JE: Yes, very definitely and as I say, Christmas Day of 1941.

DM: Christmas Day of 1941, in your estimate, was not a day of rejoicing.

JE: Absolutely not.

DM: Probably a day of prayer.

JE: Yes.

DM: People that have experiences like yours, did you ever question your faith and why these things happen to people?

JE: No, as a matter of fact, I think it strengthens your faith. You just thank god that you weren't affected the way that the people that you dealt with were, that you survived it unscathed, really.

DM: The rest of your life in the military, it continued for how many more years?

JE: I was separated from the military in my first assignment in 1945. I came back from the Pacific Ocean area under the points system, for separation of the first 1,000 that was separated under the points system.

DM: Were you ready to come home?

JE: Oh yes, very definitely. I came out of the field in Okinawa, as I indicated to you.

DM: So the unfortunate thing is you dealt with this throughout the war.

JE: Yes. Well then I was out for two and a half years and then I went back into service.

DM: You went to Korea.

JE: I was in Korea, yes.

DM: And what did you—you went through the similar experience again?

JE: Well I, again, was with dental and it was toward the wind-down of the Korean conflict that I got over there, so we didn't see too much of the actual casualties from the front at that particular time.

DM: Now, your total military experience was almost eight years?

JE: No, I served twenty years in the military.

DM: Twenty years in total.

JE: Yes.

DM: And then when you retired, did you go back to Bonneville, or...

JE: No. I retired after serving a tour in Germany and serving three different tours at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania, where I met my wife. We were married there.

DM: Uh-huh.

JE: And our first two children were born there.

DM: Wow.

JE: But of course, the hospital is no longer in existence. They closed it, as a matter of fact.

DM: After you got out of the military, what did you do?

JE: I worked for a dental manufacturing company. I was in management as a product planning manager. And then in 1975—I went with them in '63, when I got out of the service—and in 1975, I moved to Colorado Springs as a district representative.

DM: Uh-huh.

JE: And my territory at that particular time was the Rocky Mountain States from Canada to Mexico.

DM: So you were on the road a little?

JE: (Chuckles) A lot.

DM: Uh-huh.

JE: It was with the oldest and the largest dental manufacturing company in the world at that time, S. S. White.

DM: When did you finally retire?

JE: Nineteen sixty-three. I retired William Beaumont, army hospital in Texas.

DM: And then from your dental, private industry job, you stayed with them until what year?

JE: Until 1985.

DM: Okay.

JE: And then I retired.

DM: What's retirement like?

JE: Wonderful.

DM: Yeah. And you and your wife now reside in Colorado?

JE: Colorado Springs. Correct.

DM: Yeah. Have you shared all of these things with her? Ever talk to her about it?

JE: Well, more so with my kids and grandkids, but of course, they learn more if they go to one of the presentations, to a class of students and so forth. Because usually we go there in a group. We have maybe four or five and...

DM: Survivors?

JE: Survivors. And some from the navy and maybe a Marine or what have you. And relate our experience and they seem to enjoy this because it's a hands-on presentation to them. It's the actual—someone that was actually there. And it usually happens during the period that they're studying this period in history, that we have the opportunity.

DM: Besides the outreach program to students, you guys do sometimes things for other survivors and meet together and have your own camaraderie.

JE: Oh yes.

DM: And social...

JE: We meet once a— we have four chapters of Pearl Harbor Survivors in Colorado. And each one of our chapters, well, our two chapters—one in Colorado Springs and the one in Denver—meet every month, practically every month.

DM: Is that a pretty homogeneous group?

JE: Oh yes, very definitely so. And this is primarily what it is, for socialization and so forth.

DM: Comradeship?

JE: Exactly.

DM: Have you ever been to the USS *Arizona* Memorial?

JE: No.

DM: Would you like to see it someday?

JE: Yes.

DM: Would it be tough for you to see that?

JE: Possibly, yes. Realizing the situation there, that there are still a thousand, over a thousand remains down, still entombed.

DM: And you think possibly that could bring back those tougher memories.

JE: I'm sure that it would. I'm sure that it would.

DM: Okay. Well, I'd like to thank you for this interview and thank you for sharing those experiences of December 7 with us.

JE: Thank you for the opportunity.

(Taping stops, then resumes)

DM: John, I'd like you to relate one story that we unfortunately didn't catch on tape and we'd like to get that right now.

JE: This was in reference to the ladies of the night, if you will?

DM: Yeah. Could you tell me that, the story of those women, the prostitutes who came out from Honolulu to assist you?

JE: They were absolutely fantastic because you would see a G.I. in great pain, moaning and laying on a litter on the ground, and these women would come by and caress their hand or their hair, or what have you, and immediately they would quiet down.

DM: So how many of these women came out?

JE: Oh, I have no idea.

DM: But a group of them came out and were...

JE: They would do anything that was asked of them to do. It didn't make any difference.

DM: So maybe they would run to get bandages or...

JE: Anything. It didn't make any difference what it was or on the wards, if they needed to carry bedpans or what have you. They would do anything that they could possibly do to...

DM: So in a sense...

JE: ...to assist.

DM: ...these women of, were from society, of low reputation, were angels of mercy during the darkest time of the...

JE: I would say so, yes.

DM: Now, how long did they continue that?

JE: Oh, I don't know. It was only a matter of a short period of time, a day or two, until they were forbidden to come on the installation

DM: Why was that?

JE: I guess because of their reputation. I don't know.

DM: Did any particular organization object to them being there?

JE: Well, you know, I don't have the personal knowledge of it, but I had understood that the Red Cross had objected to their presence.

DM: And later these same women that were working in the houses of prostitution, they were evacuated from Hawaii.

JE: No. No. The houses of prostitution were closed.

DM: Shut down.

JE: Right and they were put out on the street.

DM: So in a sense, they were also casualties of war.

JE: Yes. They were. You might say so.

DM: Well, thank you for relating that story.

JE: You're very welcome.

END OF INTERVIEW